

**Summary of Remarks by
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Administrator
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for the

**National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA)
Board of Directors Meeting
"Expansion of Safety"
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The below text is a summary of NHTSA Administrator, Dr. Jeff Runge's remarks to NADA:

Dr. Runge explained the leading cause of death for children and adults between the age of 3 and 34 continues to be vehicle crashes. He thanked NADA for their current level of cooperation and outlined four specific items where NADA members could extend their participation.

#1: Increasing consumers' knowledge about age appropriate child restraint systems.

Many children are at an unnecessary risk of being injured in crashes because they are either in the wrong restraint for their size or completely unrestrained. Recent NHTSA research shows that only 21% of children nationwide who should be using a booster seat actually doing so.

Every salesperson should use their relationship with the customer to explain how vehicles can be used to safely transport children. Also, a full time certified technician, available to assist in installing child restraint systems, should be present at each dealership in order to help solve this growing problem. There is a misperception of Dealer liability for providing such assistance to the public. The fact is, there has only been one case brought against a dealer, but was thrown out when it was discovered that the parent had removed the seat after the safety seat check was properly performed at the dealership. There are ways to deal with this issue to ensure the protection of the dealer. Auto dealers can carry their own liability protection policies, covering their premises. Special one-day "riders" can be added to existing policies to cover on-site safety seat events they sponsor. Also, many states have "good Samaritan" clauses in their laws, protecting volunteers from liability in the course of doing good works.

#2: Tire safety maintenance

The neglecting of proper tire safety maintenance has been costly for consumers and our economy. The TREAD Act, enacted in November 2000, directed the Secretary of Transportation to take 21 different regulatory actions relating to vehicle safety within two years of enactment. The tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS) requirement alone is expected to cost consumers as much as \$1.2 billion per year.

NHTSA hopes to work with NADA, tire dealers, service centers and others to make sure that tire pressure is addressed – directing consumers to fill their tires to the pressure as prescribed by the vehicle manufacturer, not "comfort" pressure. The *Tires* section of safercar.gov in the coming weeks will provide additional information and how to participate in tire pressure activities sponsored by NHTSA.

#3: Provide information to car buyers to help select safer vehicles

Safercar.gov is NHTSA's primary means to disseminate vehicle safety information to consumers. The site provides safety information on tires, air bags, crash tests, rollover prevention and ratings. Salespeople tend to be an underutilized mechanism in helping to distribute information on vehicle safety and key technologies to consumers. They are in an ideal position to answer questions customers may have on technologies, such as, Anti-Lock Brakes (ABS), Electronic Stability Control (ESC), head restraints, back up warning sensors, and air bags. Continuing safety technology education for the sales force will help educate

customers to value safety and pay attention to new safety technologies. Support from dealership management is essential to help sales personnel make safety a focus.

Recently released NHTSA findings, found that since 1960 about 329,000 lives have been saved by vehicle safety technologies. Of all of the safety features added since 1960, the safety belt accounts for over half of all lives saved. The study also found that the cost of safety technologies is a bargain, especially when compared to luxury options on vehicles. Any research and data backing many of these safety technologies is available through NHTSA.

#4: Continue working with NADA to increase safety belt use in the U.S

In 2004, safety belt use reached a record high of 80% nationwide. In order to continue this trend, there is a need to upgrade secondary belt laws to primary laws. Studies show that primary belt law states on average have higher belt use than secondary belt law states. There are primary belt laws in 21 states, DC and Puerto Rico, and secondary laws in 28 states.

NADA members have worked to increase safety belt use in the U.S. and have been actively involved with the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign since 2003, and it has made an impact. Since NADA became actively involved with Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign, 110 lives have been saved, and \$360 million in economic costs have been prevented in Alaska, Delaware, Florida, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.